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The Determination of Trainee Teachers' Notional Frameworks About Urban

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the notional frameworks of geography trainee teachers about urban subject. Data of the study have been obtained by applying word association test on 85 undergraduates who studied urban geography lecture. The obtained data have been categorized and classified by their semantic relations respectively by the researcher. It was given as table and frequency by these categories. Examining the categories, it can be seen that the notions with high frequency are mainly the notions such as malls, population density, becoming substructure and service center, development with regards to education, health and cultural utilities, metropolises, sorts of urban, type of structure and industry. Although trainee teachers studied urban geography lecture, the fact that providing notional integrity in perceiving is hard is revealed. Notions, which are not related to each other very much, revealed about urban which is among the subjects discussed in the others category. The result shows that notions visualising in trainee teachers' minds about urban are mainly related to their reminiscence which they experimented in their daily lives, then they were taught during their lectures.

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1. Introduction

It is not possible to refer to an urban definition, on which researchers agree on, about the definition of urbans which are thought to be separated from rural settlement with their many different social, economical and cultural functions. It will be more accurate to refer to existence of many different definitions instead of only one definition (Tezcan and Kara, 2014:583). Today in which urban definition differs from region to region, or country to country, there is no common opinion on defining urban. Any association can't be provided on criteria's taken into

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consideration by the scientists who define urban. Sociologists' opinions about urban or definitions of urban and the criterias used on defining of geographers who study on urban geography differ from each other. Besides, there is not a common opinion even among geographers about characteristics of a settlement to call it an urban. However, differently from other fields, it is seen that livelihood which separates urban from rural life come into prominence for geographers to define urban. Especially, urban definition based on population criteria differs from each country or each region. The country or the region where people live also form the urban definition. The importance of urban notion increases more and more as the rates of urbanisation, especially in developing countries, which constitute the most of world population, are taken into consideration.

Urban perception is the result of individual's experiments which has begun with his first contact with urban and he's prolonged up today as result of some complicated relations besides his present relation with urban. The perception of urban by people depends on their ethic, motivation, needs, susceptibilities, prejudice and their previous experiments. And, this is somehow related to person's age, social status, group concern and level of education (Tranfer Sağdıç Borsdorf and Bender, 2010:1268).

Larsen (2004:27) defines modern urbans in a complex way in terms of structure, communication, production, culter by beginning from metropolis (father of urban) notion by means of discussing people like Balzac, Dante Augustine etc. and states that postmodernity wouldn't exist if it hadn't been for urban. Erkan (2004:19) defined urban as a system of settlement which leads a complex social structure solve problems impossible to be solved individually, and which have its specifically characteristics. Golledge and Zannaras (2004:3) think that there are many geographers who examine only physical situation of urban. However, urbans have combined and complex structures. And, each of these structures should be examined to improve our opinions. Bumin (2010:1) thinks that urban is the common subject of many fields from sociology to economy, from martial art to architecture. But beyond all these fields, urban is mainly the subject of people of urban. Aliğaoglu and Uğur (2010:3) think that urbans are settlement areas which directly or indirectly affect most of world's population because of their central locations and because the goods and services they produce are various in addition to their own population. Thoreau; defines the urban "as the palaces in which people live all together alone" (Tranf. Aliğaoglu and Uğur, 2010:5).

Urbans are places which emerge from people's common life living as community and which are formed with their life styles. However, urbans contain historical, social, cultural and political characteristics besides being places because they are people's complex works who are themselves complex. The reason for urbans' reminding problems such as traffic jam, irregular housing, air pollution, places craving for green fields, kids who cannot find anywhere to play around etc. instead of settlement areas with regular housing, broad streets, fresh air, green fields, abundant in cultural functions is unplanned over urbanization (Kaya, 2003:2).

Various approaches among both science fields and among various scientists inside the fields exist for the questions 'What is urban?' and 'What kind of a society is urban society with their different and specifical characteristics'. First of the defining differences is based on the fact that each science field demands to define urban and urban society in a manner that it can utilize its own data meaningfully. Another reason for the difference is that definitions differ depending on societies and time. The other definition which is the second base characteristic conspicuous in approaches to urbans and which inevitably states deficiency is the urban definitions based on a certain field (Açıkgöz, 2007:57).

In accordance with the Village Law No 442, settlements with a population up to 2000 are approved as village, the ones with a population between 2000 and 20000 are approved as town and the ones with a population more than 20000 are approved as urban, quoted by Tezcan and Kara (2014:583). All these definitions reveal that there are many different perceptions about urban and the attitude towards urban even in the definitions of scientists is important. Urbans which are the pioneer of civilization and development for some are the places where loneliness is lived for some. Some researchers state that urbans are settlements which must be evaluated with their environment. As can be understood from so many various approaches, the perceptions of undergraduates are directly related to what they live in the urbans.

2. Aim

The aim of study is to determine the perceptions of undergraduates about urban notion and reveal the ‘urban’ definition in their minds. Besides, it is to find different ways for different definitions and statements by taking the specifically approaches presented by undergraduates into consideration. Revealing undergraduates’ misconceptions about ‘urban’ notion is another aim of this study. The study has a kind of specifically quality with this aspect.

3. Material and Method

3.1. Research Model

In this study, word association test has been applied. Word association is a method designed to reveal relations people created among notions. It is a technique developed to reveal relations people established among notions. As notions may be units existing in topics, word association method can be used with the aim of evaluating not only how notions are perceived, but also how a field, situations, a devein people are perceived (Atasoy, 2004). Word association test (WAT) is one of the old methods utilized with the aim of analysing undergraduates’ cognitive structure and the connection among this structure, in other words the information network. In this method, undergraduates give what the key words presented to them remind them as answer in a period of time (Bahar and Özatlı, 2003:73).

3.2. Study Group

The study group consists of 4th and 5th grade undergraduates who had been studying at Necmettin Erbakan University Ahmet Keleşoğlu Faculty of Education Geography Teaching during 2013-14 academic year. The common point of the attendants is the fact that they all studied urban geography.

3.3 Gathering and Analysing Data

The statements which 85 undergraduates wrote about urban notion generate the data of the study. It’s been detected as a result of word association test applied on undergraduates that they wrote 658 notions. These notion’s been evaluated and examined one by one by the researchers. The notions mentioned in similar statements or having same meanings despite being stated in different ways have been combined. As a next stage, these notions have been put through classification. With reference to the notional classification, urban perceptions of undergraduates are as subjects related to urban geography and separate opinions that couldn’t be included in any categories besides positive and negative perceptions about urban. Following the classification process, statements have been extracted to the table and presented with frequency range.

4. Findings

Findings obtained from research show that undergraduates wrote 658 valid notions related to ‘urban’ notion. These notions have been classified into 4 different notional categories according to their semantic association. The notional categories were evaluated in 4 groups as positive, negative, the ones related to urban geography and the ones without any semantic association.

Table 1. Positive notions about urban perception (f).

Notions	Frequency
Being centrum, delivering services, administrative structure, government agencies and institutions, social services, shopping districts, malls	52
Development level, economical, health and educational opportunities	50
Industry and technology	28
Art, esthetics, amusement, luxury consumption, socializing, urban activities	19
Order, landscape, parks, rest areas, large squares, avenues, streets, districts	18
Transport facilities (intersections, broad roads, pavements)	16
Civilization (culture, urbaneness), historical artifacts	15
Trade	14
High standart of living, urban life, innovations	10
Tourism	4
Urbanisation	4
Paved with gold	1
Democracy	1
Stadium	1
Hygiene	1
Urban transformation projects	1
Cooperation	1
Total opinion	236

Table 1 reveals a kind of positive view about what urban image reminds on undergraduates. The opinions which have the most proportional share among the notion stated by undergraduates are the positive sides of urbans. In this category, urban is one of the symbols of development and opportunities in urban are much more presented in urban according to undergraduates' opinions. Undergraduates perceive the urbans as settlements abundant in educational, health and social activities. They see urbans as centres where administrative organs and institutions producing services and distributing them around gathered. Industry and technology developed in urbans and they are favourable places in terms of these opportunities. Urbans are suitable places in terms of art, social activities, luxury and socialization. Besides, urbans are symbols of modernity, cultural development and civilization. High-quality life has much importance among the positive perceptions which urbans created, besides urban scape. In addition to these, elements like urban transformation, cooperation, hygiene, democracy exist within the mentioned opinions although they are not very highly mentioned.

The general result presented by the table is that urbans are places where opportunities are abundant with their broad streets and tidy scape, services they present to their environment and their contribution to social life.

Table 2. Negative notions related to urban perception (f).

Notions	Frequency
Population density, crowd, communal life, towers, vertical development	90
Pollution (air, water, noise)	22
Unplanned urbanization (suburb, shanty towns, faubourg, ghetto, slum)	19
Loneliness, lack of feeling, nuclear family	15
Traffic jam, transport issues, public transport	14
Substructure issues	12
Increasing crime rate, security issues, confusion, scare, tension	9
Immigration	8
Environmental issues	7
Underdevelopment	4
Cosmopolitan life	2
Horizontal development and reduction in settlement areas	2
Unemployment	1
Cost of living	1
Addiction	1
Base station	1
Total opinion	208

2nd table consist of undergraduates' negative opinions about urban notion. Examining notions indicating negativeness in undergraduates' urban perception, it can be seen that overpopulation, pollution, unplanned urbanization and loneliness in urban life with its negative results are effective. Issues like complexity in urban life, environmental issues, increasing crime rate, insincere relations between people are among the negativeness in undergraduates' minds. In addition to these, elements like unemployment, high cost of living, underdevelopment exist within the mentioned opinions although they are not very highly mentioned.

Table 3. Notions about urban geography related to urban perception (f).

Notions	Frequency
Patterns (gridiron, baroque etc.), urban appearance, (linear, circular, etc), Ottoman, Roman, Greek, Islamic cities	38
City-states, metropolis, megapolis	31
Urban types and their functions (military, religious, historical, port, capitalist, colonial, socialist, Latin etc.)	24
Ahmedek, covered bazaar, defensive walls, harem and selamlık, CBA	17
Community (community life)	14
Congregation (rural life style), village, dispersed settlement,	14
Urban description, settlement type	10
Urban geography	3
Historical development	2
Globalization and territorialization	1
Urban border	1
Horizontal and vertical dispersion	1
Total opinion	156

The notions in table 3 are the ones which were put through classification related to urban geography. These notions are results of the fact that undergraduates studied urban geography instead of urban features which they come across in urban life. Undergraduates have mentioned opinions like urban types, models, urban classification as reply to urban notion. Besides, statements like ahmedek, covered bazaar, defensive walls, community and congregation life styles, globalization, and regionalism have been included. And notions such as the horizontal and vertical dispersion of urbans on earth, historical development which are included in the scope of urban geography have been included.

Table 4. Irrelevant notions related to urban perception (f).

Notions	Frequency
Adiyaman, Afyon, Ankara, İstanbul, etc.	40
Capitalism	3
Fukushime	2
Demolition	2
Religious and cultural effect	1
Natural environment	1
Legend	1
Practice	1
Noise free	1
Foundation	1
Mesopotamia	1
The Police	1
Altitude	1
Strategic	1
Artificial environment	1
Total opinion	58

Examining Table 4, we see that there are notions which have not been put through classification in urban perception. The mostly mentioned expression is urbans' names. Besides, there are notions written by undergraduates such as Fukushima, capitalism, demolition and legend.

5. Conclusion and Evaluation

It can be seen that urban perception visualised in undergraduates' minds involves various features. It involves a wide range from negative conditions they come across in urbans to their association the good memories in their lives with urban life, and even to urban-states in history. One of the pleasant sides of word association test may be its not restricting the idea circle. Undergraduates distinctively answered the question about what urban statement reminds to them. The obtained results tell that urban perception in undergraduates' mind predominantly bears positive ideas. No wonder that it isn't possible to read this completely positive. There is a considerable amount of negative opinions about urban. Examining the statements mentioned about negativeness related to urbans, it can be seen that challenges or negative events many people come across in daily life exist in undergraduates' opinions. Among them, crowd in urban life, traffic jam, shanty towns and loneliness feel become prominent. Another conclusion is the one which is mostly related to urban geography topics. Undergraduates mentioned about urban characteristics belonging to various cultures, functions of urbans rural and urban settlements in this category. Notions which can be accepted as specific such as ahmedek (a structural feature seen in Seljuk cities), covered bazaar, defensive walls exist among them. The fact that they mentioned these ideas should be thought as a result of the fact that they had studied urban geography. Notions which are among the conclusions and which are irrelevant or which don't have semantic association are, however, related to their minds at that moment. It can also be assumed that limited time to opine might be effective.

Although the obtained findings directly or indirectly overlap with the studies done before, there are some stages which they don't. For instance, the one which is very close to the research is the study which Tezcan and Kara (2014) conducted. A study was carried out in Çanakkale with the aim of determining high school students' perception related to "urban" notion and revealing "urban" description in their minds by the researchers. They classified the metaphors they obtained about students' "urban" notion in accordance with the results of research. As a result of this classification, the positive and negative notions in students' minds were revealed. Although the findings of the research mostly overlap with the results of this study, the fact that the students who were tested in this study consist of undergraduates who studied urban geography is the most distinctive characteristic, because the undergraduates mentioned a considerable amount of notions related to urban geography (172 statements).

The findings Sağdıç (2014:1267) obtained in his research about İstanbul are briefly as follows: the main elements of undergraduates' urban perception consist of natural elements more than prosperous historical places. However, historical and cultural inheritance is also important in perception. Image elements such as dynamism, culture, mystery, university, family, opportunities and varieties which could be tough as positive exist in undergraduates' urban life elements as well as negative urban image elements such as crowd, chaos, noise and tension. Undergraduates sorted traffic jam, crowd, pollution and unplanned urbanization as the most important issues of İstanbul. They assume İstanbul's geographic location as its biggest advantage. Moreover, they emphasized İstanbul's multicultural structure as important. Comparing these findings with the results of the study, differences stand out as well as partly similarities. It can be said that there is a kind of similarity between researcher's findings and positive and negative features related to urban. However, it can be understood that there are different notions between cultural inheritance and natural beauty belonging to urban and topics of urban geography course. Herein, it would be a true approach to point out to the effects of the urbans features where the research was held on students' minds. For instance, it can be thought that İstanbul's historical and cultural inheritance and its natural beauty are each determining factors.

Common points attract attention also between Linky's (1960:1) opinions about urban and the notions mentioned by undergraduates who participated in the research. While Linky expresses that a pleasurable or ordinary image can be seen when urban is examined, he lays stress on urban planning. Examining undergraduates' thoughts, it can be observed that the fact that it is a planned or unplanned urban has a mental effect on urban image.

In his research, towards Balıkesir's image in students' minds, Aliğaoğlu (2007:17) concluded that urban perception is efficient not only on physical features, but also utilizing the urban. In this utilizing process, various needs and locational dispersion of the elements which meet these needs importantly have effects. Urban perception is an event depending on time and it becomes prominent in time and it expands locational.

As a result, it would be a true approach to state that the features related to urban life which people come across are much important in forming the perception in their minds. The distinctive feature of the education, which students receive at schools, about urban image fall behind what they come across in their daily lives. The notions which undergraduates have stated show that there are mostly urban features which they experience in their lives. When the image which consists of undergraduates' perception is examined, it can be observed that urban life includes controversies. An image in which urban includes negativeness in addition to charms presented by is revealed. In fact, urban image's causing so many negativeness must not be a desired result. However, reasons such as a crowd population and immigration, maybe, make the negativeness inevitable.

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